

Media Release

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Extraordinary possibilities for art in the heart of the city

The City of Sydney will invest more than \$9 million over the next 10 years in public artworks that will breathe new life into streets, squares and laneways across the City Centre.

Renowned international curator Barbara Flynn has prepared a new public art plan for central Sydney, which could see a spectacular artwork span the length of George Street and sculpture gardens created in some of the city's best-loved public squares.

"The transformation of George Street into a light rail and pedestrian boulevard gives us a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to reshape the heart of our city and introduce important new public artworks," Lord Mayor Clover Moore said.

"We have the chance to create magnificent public spaces filled with art of the highest quality that can act as a constant source of inspiration for our residents, workers and visitors.

"The City will bring the work of some of the best artists and designers from across Australia and the rest of the world to Sydney for a series of significant new permanent works as well as innovative temporary programs.

"Barbara Flynn's ambitious proposals for George Street and the squares and laneways that surround it are exciting and I look forward to seeing these ideas take shape over the next few years."

The draft City Centre Public Art Plan identifies a series of major projects to be funded by Council over the next decade. Ideas for artists to develop include:

- Returning **George Street** to its former glory as the city's central spine. Ideas include an artwork spanning the length of George Street, animating the voids between buildings with site-specific artworks, and placing art up high to make it more visible;
- Activating the **east-west connections** that cross George Street at intersections like Park, Hunter and Bridge streets with large-scale gateway installations or artworks covering entire building façades;
- Reimagining **Sydney's public squares** with elegant and peaceful sculpture gardens in popular spots like Barrack Street and Regimental Square, offering pedestrians an escape from the hustle and bustle of George Street; and
- Continuing the City's **laneway revitalisation program** with both permanent and temporary works, encouraging Sydneysiders to explore the fascinating stories behind these hidden nooks and crannies.

The plan also presents a range of ideas the City could pursue in partnership with cultural organisations and private developers, including:

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- Joining forces with cultural institutions to create **performance artworks** to activate major streets and squares during light rail construction;
- Giving Martin Place a new lease of life as Sydney's outdoor 'lounge room' through a new **city-to-city art exchange** with major cultural capitals like London, Paris, Beijing and New York;
- Establishing Sydney's first official **artist-in-residence program**, which could include some of the world's best-known artists and designers, alongside promising local practitioners; and
- Working with **private developers** throughout the city to ensure that major new developments meet design excellence standards and incorporate high-quality public artworks wherever possible.

Barbara Flynn is a Sydney-based contemporary art curator and advisor with more than 30 years' experience including owning and managing galleries in New York, overseeing the private collections of major Australian corporations and curating public art projects.

Most recently, she was responsible for the artist selection and implementation of large-scale artworks at some of Sydney's most spectacular new developments, including 1 Bligh Street and 8 Chifley Square.

Barbara was appointed as the City's curatorial advisor for the City Centre in December last year, and has spent the past six months consulting with international experts, City Design staff, the Public Art Advisory Panel and the Design Advisory Panel to develop the plan.

"Art has an important role to play in giving artists a voice to effect change," Barbara said.

"This plan proposes working situations that will benefit all artists regardless of their cultural background, whether they are based locally or elsewhere, and a structure for artists to collaborate in.

"It also sets a framework to enable the Council to achieve a singular group of meaningful, relevant, and future-oriented works of art."

For more information, visit: cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/cityart

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